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ABSTRACT

To comply with state law, the results of the South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) are reported for the 1989-90 school year. Accomplishments included: (1) administering the readiness test--the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB)--to all first graders; (2) administering criterion-referenced basic skills tests to all students in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8; (3) administering the Exit Examination to eligible students in grades 10, 11, and 12, and to adult education students; (4) administering BSAP science tests to students in grades 3, 6, and 8, and applying state standards for the BSAP science test for the first time; and (5) monitoring the implementation of the instructional components of the BSAP. Of the 55,911 first graders tested using the CSAB in August and September of 1989, 74.4% were classified as ready, a percentage that has remained basically the same since 1985. About 24% of the first graders tested in 1989 were classified as not ready. Between 1979 and 1989, the number of students classified as ready increased by 14.2 percentage points. CSAB data for the past 2 years show a large increase in the proportion of first grade students who attended a public kindergarten at age 5 years (74.7% in 1979 and 87.5% in 1989). Performance on the BSAP tests indicated significant improvement in reading for every grade, but stabilized performance in mathematics and writing over the last 3 years. Increasing numbers of high school students passed the Exit Examination; adult students were taking the Exit Examination for the first time. Monitoring the BSAP resulted in teacher education and other staff training efforts. Recommendations by the Basic Skills Advisory Commission are included. Seven bar graphs illustrate the findings. (SLD)

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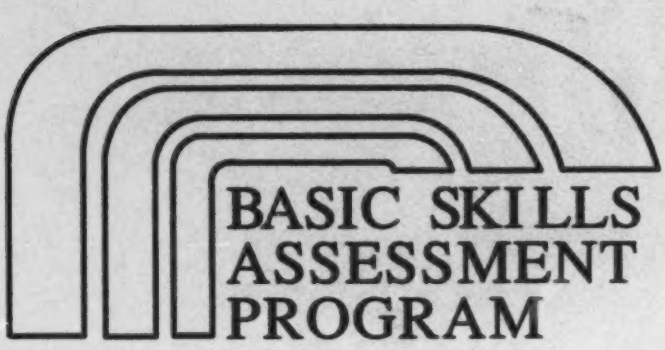

REPORT ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
1989-90

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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM 1989-90

South Carolina Board of Education
John C. Shiflet, Jr., Chair

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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM 1989-90

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to comply with Section 1(d)(2)(l) of the 1978 Act 631 (the Basic Skills Assessment Program) as amended, which requires that the State Board of Education, through the State Department of Education, "report the results of the program annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, the school districts and to the general public, together with any recommendations of the South Carolina Basic Skills Advisory Commission (BSAC) created pursuant to Section 1A of this Act."

The timetable in the BSAP legislation requires that specific activities be completed in each academic year. Descriptions of the yearly activities and accomplishments are presented in this and in previous implementation reports. The 1990 South Carolina Department of Education *Catalog of Publications and Audiovisuals* provides a list and description of these annual reports, as well as other resource materials that have been developed to supplement the Basic Skills Assessment Program. The purpose of this report is to present and explain the 1989-90 Basic Skills Assessment Program, as prescribed in the 1978 legislation and as amended by the Education Improvement Act (EIA) in 1984.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING 1989-90

In accordance with the BSAP Act of 1978 and the EIA of 1984, the following activities were accomplished during the 1989-90 school year.

- The readiness test *(Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery)* was administered to all first grade students.
- Criterion-referenced tests (BSAP), which were based upon the basic skills objectives, were administered to all students in Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8.
- The Exit Examination was administered to eligible students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 and to Adult Education students.
- BSAP Science Tests were administered in Grades 3, 6, and 8; and the standards were applied for the first time.
- Department of Education staff monitored the implementation of the instructional components of the Basic Skills Assessment Program.

INTRODUCTION

(continued)

These activities and accomplishments are discussed in the following sections.

- "Test Administration -- Readiness"
- "Test Administration -- Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 and Exit Examination"
- "Test Development and Implementation -- Science"
- "Instruction"

TEST ADMINISTRATION
READINESS

BACKGROUND

Section 1(b)(1) of the 1978 Act 631 (Basic Skills Assessment Program) requires that a readiness test be administered to all public school students at the beginning of Grade 1. According to the legislation, the test used should be designed to measure a student's readiness to begin the formal school curriculum. The results of the test are to be used to provide appropriate developmental activities to first grade students.

The *Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB)*, published by Teacher's College Press, was selected for use in the Basic Skills Assessment Program primarily because of its relationship to the 18 kindergarten objectives. It is an individually administered readiness battery requiring approximately 25 to 30 minutes per child for administration.

To be considered "ready", a child must score at least 88 out of a possible 117 points. Although a cut-off is necessary for certain official purposes, there may be little actual difference in the developmental levels of children scoring a few points on either side of this division. Students' performance on the *CSAB* provides valuable information concerning the degree of readiness at the time of testing and should be used only for the purpose of planning appropriate programs for each child.

RESULTS

Of the 55,911 first graders tested on the *CSAB* in August and September of 1989, 74.4% were classified as "ready". The proportion of students "ready" for the first grade has remained basically the same since 1985, when the percentage was 74.2. Approximately 24% of first graders were classified as "not ready" in 1989. Slightly more than 1% of the *CSAB* results were classified as incomplete. Figure 1 reveals the upward trend in readiness scores over the past ten years. Between 1979 and 1989, the number of students classified as "ready" increased by 14.2 percentage points.

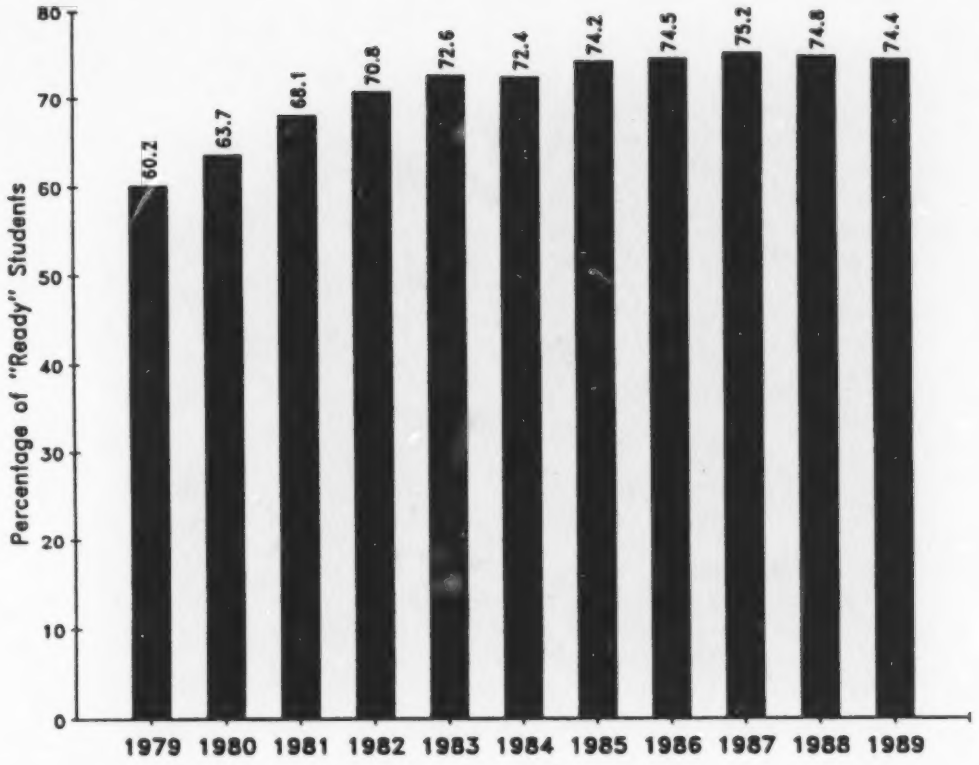
CSAB data for the past two years show a large increase in the proportion of first grade students who attended a public kindergarten at age 5 (74.7% in 1979, 87.5% in 1989) and a decrease in the proportion who had no five-year-old kindergarten experience (7% in 1979, 0.5% in 1989). School observations by staff, as well as conversations with school administrators and teachers, have suggested that kindergarten objectives continue to receive more emphasis in public school programs and in other programs for five-year-olds. In addition, in public programs for four-year-olds, the enrollment of students identified as "at risk" is increasing across the state. These factors may have contributed to the impressive *CSAB* gains for all groups between 1979 and 1989.

Additional information about the content of the *CSAB*, proper interpretation of results, detailed demographic subgroups, and results by district may be found in *Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB): Results for Fall, 1989, Administration*, available from the Office of Research, South Carolina Department of Education.

FIGURE 1

Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery

Comparison Across Years



BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), established by legislation in 1978, required the establishment of statewide educational objectives and the use of criterion-referenced tests to assess student performance on those objectives. [See 1978 Act No. 631, Section 1(a).] The Education Improvement Act of 1984 amended the BSAP Act to include the administration of an Exit Examination. Award of a South Carolina High School Diploma is contingent upon passing this examination.

The 16 basic skills objectives were identified during the 1978-79 school year through a process which was guided by the Basic Skills Reading, Mathematics, and Writing Committees and involved over 18,000 South Carolina educators, as well as members of the general public. Each of the 16 objectives -- six in reading, five in mathematics, and five in writing -- is repeated at each grade level in essentially the same form but at a different level of complexity. A listing of the 16 continuing objectives in the three subject areas is presented below.

Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Decoding and Word Meaning	Concepts	Handwriting
Details	Operations	Mechanics
Main Idea	Measurement	Word Usage
Reference Usage	Geometry	Sentence Formation
Analysis of Literature	Problem Solving	Composition
Inference		

The BSAP Tests and Exit Examination, administered in the spring of each year, were devised to assess the extent to which students have mastered the statewide educational objectives. Scores on the Reading and Mathematics Tests for all grades tested are reported as scale scores to districts, schools, teachers, and parents. The statewide standard was set at a scale score of 700. The scores on the Writing Tests are reported as 0, 1, 1.5, 2, 3, 3.5, and 4, with the standard set at 3. The first statewide administration of the Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 BSAP Reading and Mathematics Tests was in 1981. For the Grades 6 and 8 BSAP Writing Tests, the baseline year was 1983. The Exit Examination (Reading, Mathematics, and writing) was first administered statewide to tenth grade students in 1986.

A brief discussion of the state results for the BSAP Tests and the Exit Examination follows. For a complete report of these results, see *1989-90 BSAP Results* available from the Office of Research, South Carolina Department of Education.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8 AND EXIT EXAMINATION

TEST ADMINISTRATION

GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8 AND EXIT EXAMINATION (continued)

STATE RESULTS -- BY GRADE

The BSAP Tests were administered April 23 through April 27, 1990, in Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 and at the Exit Examination level in 91 districts in South Carolina and in Palmetto Unified School District and the Department of Youth Services. Students receiving special education services because of handicapping conditions were included in the testing unless their Individual Education Plans (IEP's) indicated that the BSAP Tests would be inappropriate (as required by Public Law 94-142).

Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8. This year 55,140 first graders, 48,708 second graders, 48,555 third graders, 45,856 sixth graders, and 43,930 eighth graders were tested in reading and mathematics, for a total of 242,189 students. Writing was also assessed in Grades 6 and 8.

The 1990 BSAP results indicate that almost nine out of ten students in Grades 1, 2, and 3 and seven out of ten students in Grades 6 and 8 met the standards in both reading and mathematics. The lowest percentage of students meeting the reading standard was in Grade 6 (76.7%), while the highest percentage was in Grade 3 (88.5%). In mathematics, the highest percentage meeting the standard occurred in Grade 2 (90.4%) and the lowest in Grade 6 (70.9%). In writing, 77.5% of Grade 6 students and 81.8% of Grade 8 students met the standard.

Exit Examination. In 1990, the Exit Examination was administered to any student in a South Carolina public school or Adult Education program who: (1) met the State Board regulations to be classified as a tenth grader; (2) was classified as an eleventh or twelfth grader, but had not taken the Exit Examination; or, (3) regardless of grade level classification (e.g., adult education students), had taken the Exit Examination during the last administration and failed to meet the standard on one or more subtests. The only exception would involve students whose IEP's exempt them from taking the examination. Several cautions are in order with regard to interpretation of Exit Examination data. First, one should remain cognizant of the particular group of students being analyzed. Students at several grade levels, with different attempt statuses (first, second, or third), and Adult Education students took one or more of the Exit Examination subtests.

TEST ADMINISTRATION
GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8 AND EXIT EXAMINATION
(continued)

In addition, the demographics of any particular group may change drastically over time because of factors such as dropout rates and mobility. Moreover, since students have multiple opportunities to pass the subtests, many different analyses of the results are possible. In this report, only the performance of 10th grade and Adult Education students taking the Exit Examination for the first time is presented.

In 1990, the scores of tenth graders who took the *Exit Examination* for the first time improved on all three subtests. This year 85.6%, 83.9%, and 84.2% of the students met the standards in reading, mathematics, and writing, respectively; while 69.7% passed all three subtests (as compared to 66.1% in 1989).

Of the Adult Education students attempting the examination for the first time, 65% met the standard in reading, 49% in mathematics, and 61% in writing. This year 30.1% of the Adult Education students passed all three subtests on their first attempt.

STATE RESULTS -- BY SUBJECT AREA

The BSAP test results for the State in 1981 (the first year of administration), 1988, 1989, and 1990 are presented and discussed by subject area on the following pages. A bar graph is provided for each subject area, showing the percentages of students meeting the standard (a scale score of 700 in reading and mathematics and a score of 3 in writing) in each grade in the baseline year and for the last three years (1988, 1989 and 1990).

Figure 2 shows the percentages of students meeting the standards in reading for the baseline year (1981) and for the years 1988, 1989, and 1990. In 1990, performance in reading varied with grade. Over the past year, *Reading* scores remained relatively stable in Grades 2 and 6 (with changes of less than 1 percent point), increased in Grades 3 and 8, and decreased in Grade 1. When comparing the 1990 results to the 1981 results, reading performance has improved significantly for every grade.

Figure 3 shows the percentages of students meeting the standards in mathematics for 1981, 1988, 1989, and 1990. In mathematics, the percentages of students meeting the standards decreased for grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 between 1989 and 1990. Decreases ranged from 1.0 percentage point in Grade 8 to 2.6 percentage points in Grade 6. When comparing the 1990 results to the 1981 results, mathematics performance has improved significantly in every grade. However, over the last three years performance in mathematics appears to have stabilized in all tested grades.

Figure 4 shows the percentages of students meeting the standards in writing for 1983, 1988, 1989, and 1990. Between 1989 and 1990, performance in writing remained relatively stable in Grade 6 but decreased slightly in Grade 8 (1.0 percentage point). Examination of the scores for both of these grades reveals that performance has essentially stabilized over the past three years.

FIGURE 2

Percentages of Students Meeting the Standard in Reading

Basic Skills Assessment Program

1981, 1988, 1989, and 1990

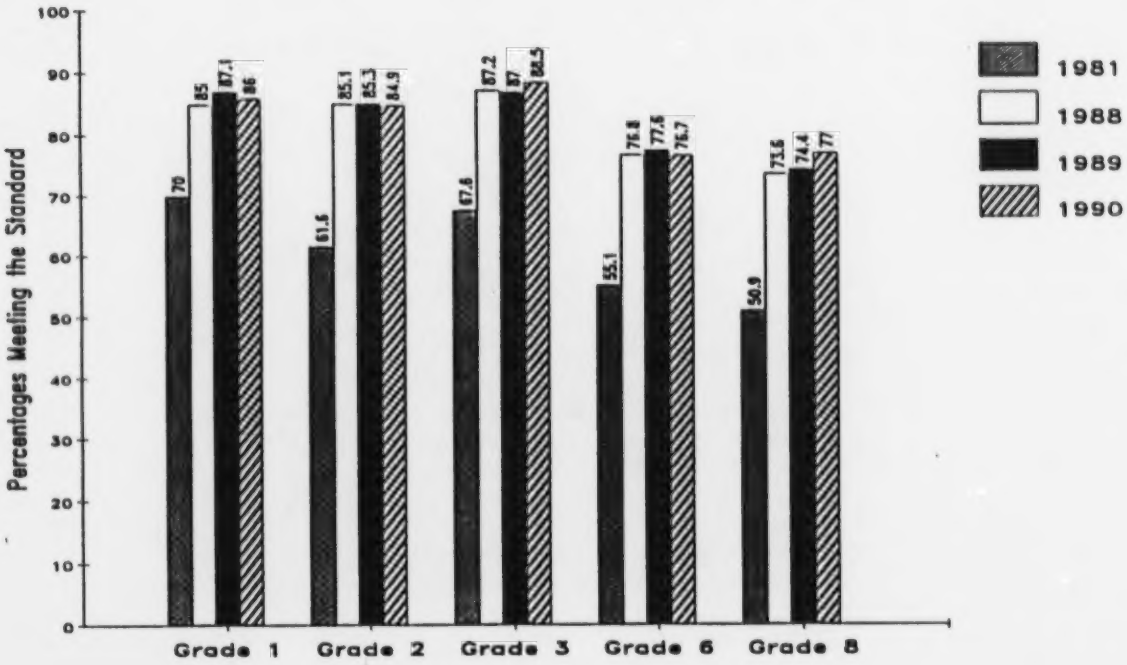


FIGURE 3

Percentages of Students Meeting the Standard in Mathematics

Basic Skills Assessment Program

1981, 1988, 1989, and 1990

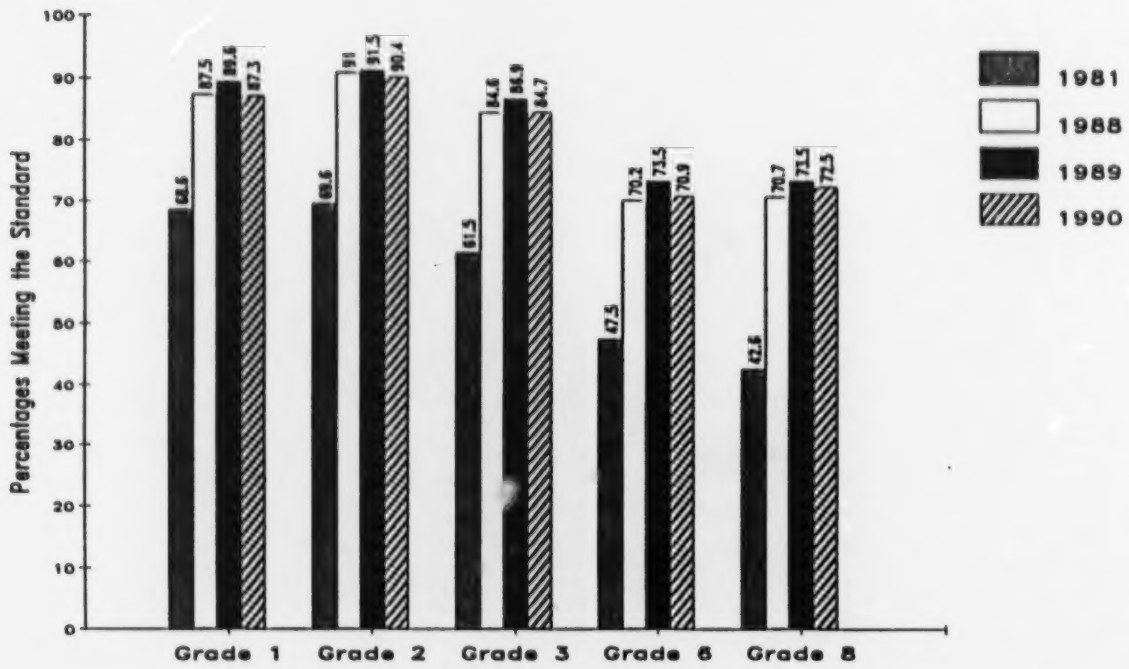
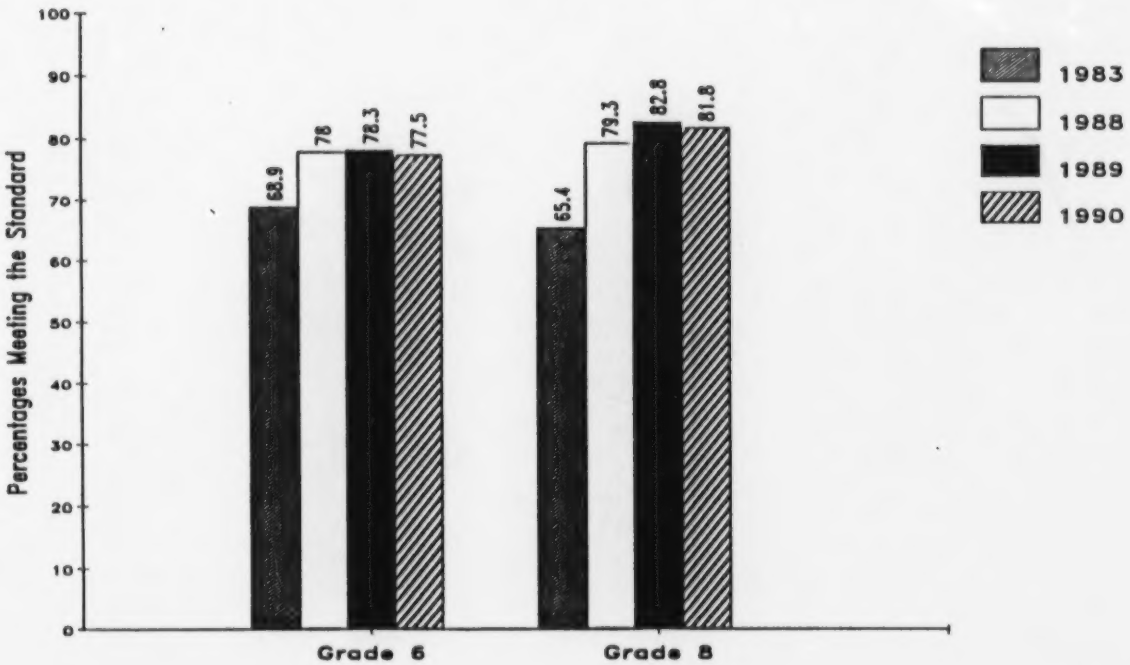


FIGURE 4

Percentages of Students Meeting the Standard in Writing

Basic Skills Assessment Program

1983, 1988, 1989, and 1990



EXIT EXAMINATION RESULTS

The percentages of tenth grade students who met the subtest standards when they took the *Exit Examination* for the first time are represented in Figure 5 for 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990. In 1990, 38,051 tenth graders attempted all or part of the *Exit Examination* for the first time. As shown in the figure, of those tenth graders who attempted the particular subtest for the first time, 85.6% met the standard in reading, 83.9%, in mathematics, and 84.2%, in writing. In 1990, 69.7% of the first attempt tenth graders passed all three subtests.

Between 1989 and 1990, the percentages of these students meeting the standards increased in all areas. The greatest increase (5.1 percentage points) occurred in writing. There was a gain of 2.5 percentage points in mathematics, while performance in reading rose 2.0 percentage points. The percentage of tenth graders passing all three subtests of the *Exit Examination* on their first attempts increased 3.6 percentage points between 1989 and 1990. The first students directly affected by the results of the *Exit Examination*, the graduating class of 1989-90, first attempted the Examination in 1988 (as tenth graders).

Over the past five administrations (1986 to 1990), tenth grade students taking the *Exit Examination* for the first time have made gains on all three subtests. Increases of 13.2, 15.9, and 8.3 percentage points have occurred in reading, mathematics, and writing, respectively. The percentage of students passing all three subtests has also risen, from 55.0% to 69.7%, an increase of 14.7 percentage points.

In 1990, 990 Adult Education students attempted the Exit Examination for the first time. Figure 6 shows the percentages of these students who met the standards in 1988, 1989, and 1990. This year 65%, 49%, and 61% met the standards in reading, mathematics, and writing, respectively; and 30.1% passed all three subtests. As shown in Figure 6, the percentages of Adult Education students meeting the standard on their first attempt on the Exit Examination rose substantially in every area. Since this student population is relatively small and subject to changes, interpretation of changes in scores over the years should be addressed with some caution, however.

FIGURE 5

Percentages of 10th Grade Students
Meeting the Standards on the Exit Examination
in 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990
First Attempt

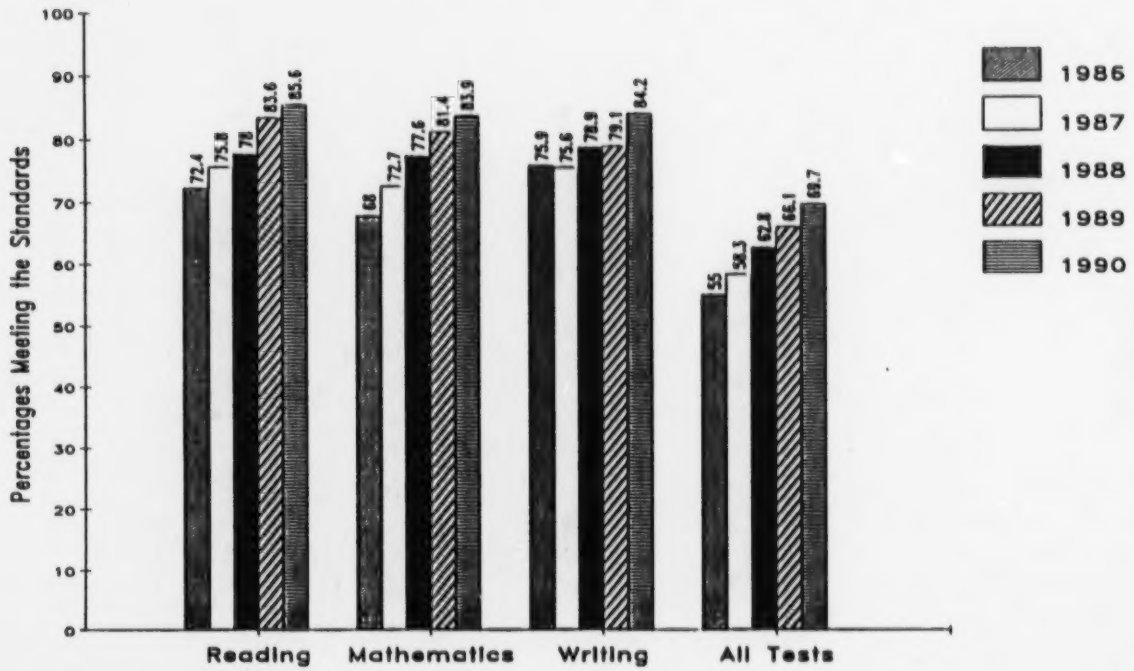
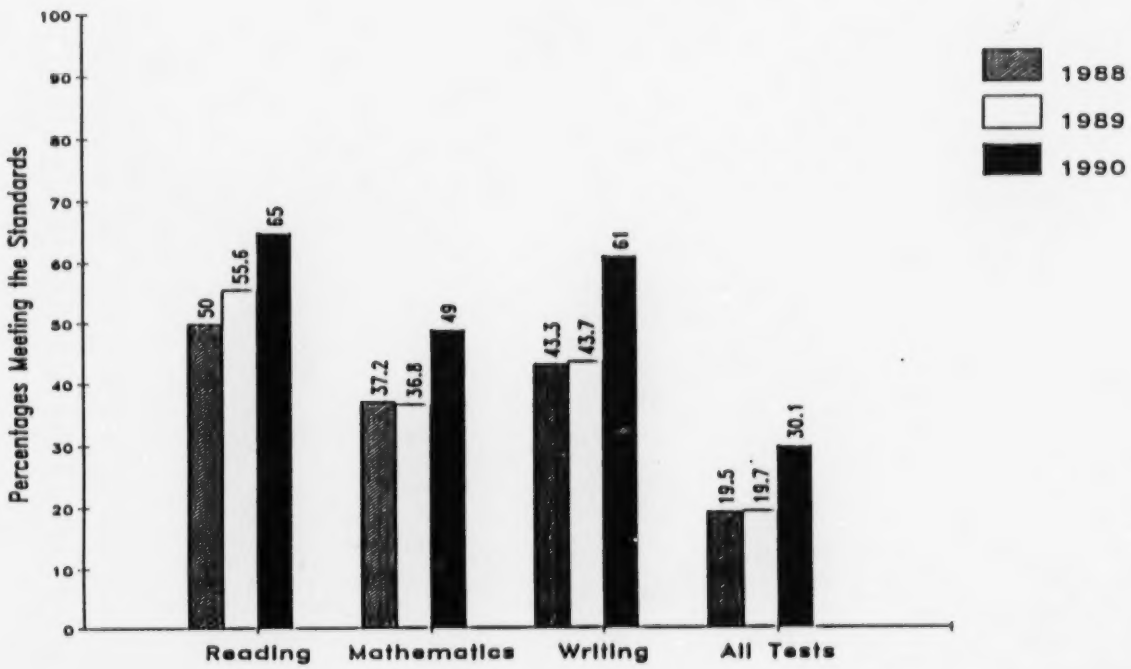


FIGURE 6

Percentages of Adult Education Students
Meeting the Standards on the Exit Examination
in 1988, 1989, and 1990
First Attempt



TEST ADMINISTRATION

GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8 AND EXIT EXAMINATION (continued)

SUMMARY

The *Basic Skills Assessment program (BSAP) Tests* were administered statewide April 23 - 27, 1990. The basic skill area tests administered at each grade level, including those on the *Exit Examination*, are listed below.

Grade 1	*BSAP Reading and Mathematics Tests*
Grade 2	*BSAP Reading* and *Mathematics Tests*
Grade 3	*BSAP Reading, Mathematics,* and *Science Tests*
Grade 6	*BSAP Reading, Mathematics, Writing,* and *Science Tests*
Grade 8	*BSAP Reading, Mathematics, Writing,* and *Science Tests*
Grades 10, 11, 12	*BSAP Exit Examination: Reading, Mathematics,* and *Writing Subtests*
Adult Education	*BSAP Exit Examination: Reading, Mathematics,* and *Writing Subtests*

In 1990, the percentage of students meeting the standard on the *BSAP Reading Test* varied from 76.7 in Grade 6 to 88.5 in Grade 3. Other percentages for reading were: Grade 1, 86 percent; Grade 2, 84.9 percent; Grade 8, 77 percent; and *Exit Examination* (first attempt, Grade 10), 85.6 percent. Grade 8 had the highest gains between 1981 and 1990 with an increase of 26.1 percent of the students meeting the reading standard. Significant increases were also observed in Grades 1, 2, 3, and 6 where increases of 16.0, 23.3, 20.9, and 21.6 percentage points, respectively, occurred.

On the *BSAP Mathematics Test*, the percentage of students meeting the standard in 1990 ranged from 70.9 percent in Grade 6 to 90.4 percent in Grade 2. Other percentages for mathematics were: Grade 1, 87.3 percent; Grade 3, 84.7 percent; Grade 8, 72.5 percent; and *Exit Examination* (Grade 10, first attempt), 83.9 percent. Of all the grades tested, the greatest increase from 1981 to 1990 was 29.9 percentage points in Grade 8. Significant improvements were also observed in Grades 1, 2, 3, and 6 with increases of 18.7, 20.8, 23.2, and 23.4 percentage points, respectively,

The *BSAP Writing Test* was administered in Grades 6 and 8 and at the Exit level. The *Writing Test* requires the student to actually write a composition based on a specific prompt. On the *Writing Test*, 77.5 percent of the sixth graders, 81.8 percent of the eighth graders, and 84.2 percent of the *Exit Examination* (first attempt) tenth graders met the standard. Since 1983, the writing performance of sixth and eight grade has increased 8.6 and 16.4 percentage points, respectively.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8 AND EXIT EXAMINATION

(continued)

For the fifth year, a clear majority of the students in Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 met the standards on *BSAP Reading, Mathematics, and Writing Tests*. However, gains (of 1.0 percentage point or more) in scores during the past year were noted in only two of the twelve grade by subject categories: Grade 3 reading (1.5 percentage points) and Grade 8 reading (2.6 percentage points). Scores remained relatively stable in three of the categories, while they decreased in the other seven.

Performance on the *Exit Examination* has improved each year for 10th grade students taking the test for the first time. Between 1989 and 1990 gains ranged from 2.0 percentage points for reading to 5.1 percentage points for writing. Dramatic increases are even more apparent when 1990 performance is compared to that of 1986 when the *Exit Examination* was administered for the first time. Gains over these five administrations range from 8.3 percentage points for writing to 15.9 percentage points for mathematics.

TEST DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

SCIENCE

STANDARD SETTING AND 1990 ADMINISTRATION

The BSAP Science Tests were developed to measure for Grades 3, 6, and 8 achievement in four areas: science concepts; science process skills; science and technology; and the nature of science. The number of items on the total test, as well as the number per objective, varies by grade level.

Spring, 1990, was the first year in which standards were applied to the *BSAP Science Tests*. These standards were based on recommendations of committees of science educators, as well as on test data from the Spring, 1990, administration of the test. Based on an analysis of the test data, the Department of Education recommended an adjustment to the Grade 6 standard to make it consistent with the standards for Grades 3 and 8.

On July 11, 1990, the State Board adopted the *Science Test* standards. The motion allowed for the reporting of each grade level standard as a scale score and required that the standards be "reviewed and revised as necessary prior to the 1993 administration of the tests." (Refer to the *Report to the State Board of Education on Data and Procedures Pertaining to Establishing Standards for the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) Science Test* presented to the State Board in July, 1990.)

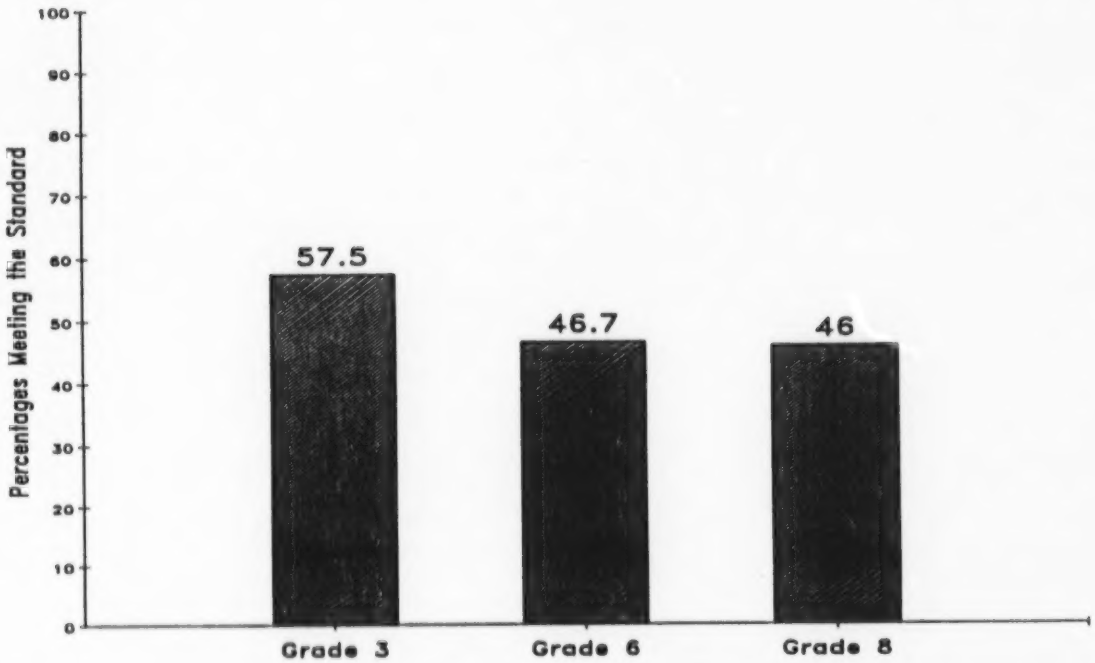
In 1990, 48,673 Grade 3 students, 45,789 Grade 6 students, and 43,007 Grade 8 students were administered the *BSAP Science Test*. Figure 7 shows the percentages of students who met the standards for the *BSAP Science Test* this year. Performance varied with grade with 57.5% of the students meeting the standard in Grade 3, 46.7% in Grade 6, and 46.0% in Grade 8.

FIGURE 7

Percentages of Students Meeting the Standard in Science

Basic Skills Assessment Program

in 1990



TEST DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

SCIENCE

(continued)

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

In an effort to assist teachers and school administrators with the Basic Skills Program in Science, the development of the Science Implementation Resource Documents was initiated. A consortium composed of higher education faculty who are members of the BSAP Science Advisory Committee was contracted to assist with this project.

The purpose of the Science Implementation Resource Documents is to address three major aspects of effective teaching in science -- instructional strategies, instructional units of activities, and instructional resources. These documents are designed to assist teachers with their instruction as it relates to the State BSAP Science Objectives. They represent the instructional needs expressed by the district BSAP Science Liaisons, the BSAP Science Advisory Committee, and science teachers.

Four major components of the project have been identified: the BSAP Science Overview, BSAP Science Teaching Through Inquiry, Model Science Units, BSAP Science, and the Science Resource Document. The first of these resources, the BSAP Science Overview, was distributed to school districts in January, 1990.

The **BSAP Science Overview** consists of two videotapes and a user's guide. The videotapes are designed to present an overview of the BSAP science program and to answer questions frequently asked by teachers and administrators.

BSAP Science Teaching Through Inquiry provides teachers with information that will help them better understand how to plan and implement their science instruction with the BSAP Science Objectives. This resource was distributed to all teachers of science in November, 1990.

Nine **Model Science Units** are planned to provide additional assistance and guidance in integrating the BSAP Science Objectives into instruction. These will be disseminated in the spring and fall of 1991. The units will reflect a hands-on approach to learning and emphasize the investigative nature of science. In addition to the printed format of the units, each unit will be accompanied by a videotape illustrating exemplary teaching methods.

The **Science Resource Document** will consist of a comprehensive listing of human and material resources to enhance effective teaching and learning of science. A printed version of this resource, as well as a microcomputer database, will be made available to districts by June of 1991.

EVALUATION AND REVISION OF THE BSAP OBJECTIVES

BSAP II -- A TOTAL APPROACH

The 1978 legislation mandating the BSAP called for the South Carolina Department of Education to "revise and update the tests administered under the program as deemed appropriate by the Department." Consistent with the legislation, the Department has recently initiated a 45-month project to evaluate and, if warranted, revise elements of the BSAP.

There are two reasons, beyond the legislative mandate, for the evaluation and potential revision of the BSAP objectives. The first is that since the development of the BSAP almost a decade ago, new trends in curriculum and assessment have occurred. New views as to what constitutes a good reader or writer, as well as recent national developments in early childhood education and mathematics, support a review of the BSAP in terms of its impact on students.

The second reason for a review and possible revision of the BSAP is that the implementation of the Education Improvement Act of 1984 has required the use of BSAP test results for purposes beyond those that were initially stipulated in the 1978 legislation. Currently, BSAP test results are used in connection with program evaluation, school incentive programs, remedial programs, gifted and talented programs, and grade-level promotion. These additional purposes require use of a current, up-to-date assessment program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

As noted above, the purpose of the current project is to evaluate and, as necessary, revise the BSAP kindergarten objectives, as well as the reading, mathematics, and writing objectives for Grades 1 through 12. Four BSAP II Advisory Committees (in the fields of reading, mathematics, writing, and early childhood) were appointed to provide guidance to Department Curriculum and Assessment personnel during the entire project. These committees have met three times: first, to appraise the current status of the BSAP; secondly, to make recommendations as to instructional/assessment modifications they wished to see reflected in BSAP II; and, most recently, to react to proposed objective frameworks for the four target areas. These Advisory Committees play a major role in each of the five major tasks described subsequently.

Task I of the project involved the development of guidelines that would serve to direct the evaluation and revision of the BSAP. They included a rationale based on current information about national curriculum and assessment trends in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and early childhood education. In addition, the guidelines identified and described recommended procedures for undertaking the evaluation and revision of the BSAP. The guidelines were developed by the Advisory Committees and submitted to the Department in the

EVALUATION AND REVISION OF THE BSAP OBJECTIVES *(continued)*

form of content-area recommendations in June of 1989. Based on the recommendations of the BSAP II Advisory Committees and input from Department staff, a survey of proposed directions for BSAP II was developed. This statewide survey was distributed to all South Carolina teachers and administrators. It provided them with an opportunity to register agreement or disagreement with the proposed changes that, if approved, would represent the chief features of BSAP II.

A series of public meetings were held in the fall of 1989 to provide the state's citizens with an opportunity to react to the proposed BSAP changes. This was an additional opportunity for educators to register their views, in person, regarding the proposed features of BSAP II. Input from the survey and public meetings was used in the development of BSAP II objectives.

Tasks II and III involve the revision of the reading, mathematics, writing, and kindergarten objectives, as well as the selection and/or development of test-item specifications (i.e., rules for item writers). These tasks also include the development of item prototypes, which are sample items for assessing the BSAP II objectives.

Task IV consists of an ongoing public awareness program that will be conducted throughout the project to provide opportunities for the educational community and the public in general to better understand and contribute to the BSAP evaluation and revision process.

Task V involves the development of instructional materials and strategies, as well as the description of available resources designed to facilitate the implementation of the revised BSAP objectives. The development of these materials and strategies will be completed by March, 1992.

As part of a separate test-development project, the actual BSAP II tests and related support materials will be constructed, field- tested, and implemented. The BSAP II tests will not be administered any earlier than the 1993-1994 school year.

MONITORING

The Basic Skills Section administers programs and renders service to districts in the implementation of programs related to the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), EIA compensatory/remedial efforts, kindergarten, child development, parent education, writing, reading, mathematics, and science. Major state-funded programs managed by the Basic Skills Section in 1989-90 were EIA compensatory/remedial ($65,055,368), child development ($13,852,479), and effective partnerships for parent education ($156,309).

As required by a 1989 legislative proviso, the Basic Skills Section monitors all school districts over a three-year period. In 1989-90, 150 schools were monitored in 30 districts. Pre-monitoring technical assistance, school-specific reports, and follow-up services were provided to each district monitored. Extensive assistance was provided to aid each school in meeting all requirements outlined in the BSAP legislation and EIA compensatory/remedial regulations. Technical assistance and reviews of records were also offered to districts that will be monitored in 1990-91.

Compensatory programs which were identified as not meeting the required 1.0 NCE gain in the state evaluation report are required to undergo a formal process evaluation. With assistance from Basic Skills section consultants, twenty-eight schools that did not meet the required gains conducted self assessments and formulated plans for program improvement. On-site visits were scheduled for the programs not meeting the gain requirement for three consecutive years.

Early childhood consultants assisted districts in the operation of readiness, kindergarten, and child development programs. In 1990-91, state kindergarten programs served 42,344 five-year-olds. Funding of $13,852,479 was allocated to 89 districts to serve 12,241 children in child development programs and 68 families in home-based parent education programs. The Target 2000 Parent Education Program utilized $864,769 to fund 14 district pilot programs for families of children 0-5.

Science, language arts, and mathematics consultants conducted over 200 staff development sessions. Along with taking a leadership role in the revision of the Basic Skills Instructional Program, Basic Skills Section consultants planned and conducted science workshops for school principals and lead science teachers; coordinated the statewide Reading Recovery awareness effort; trained over 300 educators in Family Math; conducted Project Hands-On Mathematics training for 350 participants in nine regional sessions; identified 1990 Exemplary Writing Programs; co-sponsored the Early Childhood Summer Institute; coordinated training for EIA child development teachers and administrators; and provided eight full days of training by state and national experts to Target 2000 parent education coordinators. Two new publications entitled *The State of Writing* and *Examining the Exit Exam* were produced and distributed to teachers.

INSTRUCTION

BASIC SKILLS ADVISORY COMMISSION

ACTIVITIES

The Basic Skills Advisory Commission, created by Act 631, consists of 25 members. Appointments to the Commission are made by the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. During 1989-90, the Commission held seven meetings and was actively involved in monitoring the development and implementation of the BSAP. A listing of the Commission membership for 1989-90 is provided in Appendix A.

RESOLUTION

In 1990 the Commission issued the following resolution pertaining to grade retention.

Whereas state and national research clearly indicates that the policy of grade retention has not proven to be an effective means of increasing children's learning as measured by standardized tests; and

Whereas over 35,000 children are retained each year in South Carolina at an escalating cost approximating $12,000,000 annually; and

Whereas there is strong evidence that school retention is closely related to the development of negative self-image and low self-esteem at a very young age and with increased student dropout at older ages;

The Basic Skills Advisory Commission hereby resolves that immediate efforts be undertaken in all South Carolina school districts to identify and employ alternative programs to replace the general practice of grade retention at the elementary level.

The Commission recommends consideration of the following as alternatives:

(a) During grades K-3, students would be placed on continuous progress learning levels and closely monitored for success in reaching learning standards established by the BSAP programs at the grade 3 level. Retentions prior to grade 4 may be by parental request.

(b) Retention at grades 4-8 be closely monitored by the school district and that retention be minimized by using alternatives whenever possible.

(c) Retentions in grades 9-12 be based on criteria similar to that presently in place in the State.

District policy shall clearly state the specific promotion/retention programs of the school district, as well as particular instructional alternatives that will be utilized. The strategies should include but not be limited to:

-- Improved curriculum and instructional strategies

-- Summer school (special programs)

-- Peer tutoring

-- Smaller pupil/teacher ratios

-- Instructional assistants in classrooms to provide more individualized assistance

-- Parental support/training programs

-- Extended school-day sessions for remediation and homework

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Basic Skills Assessment Program Legislation makes provision for the Basic Skills Advisory Commission to include recommendations and advice to the Governor, General Assembly, and the State Board of Education. Pursuant to the provisions of the law, the Basic Skills Advisory Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. (a) That the present longitudinal studies (tracking) of a sampling of students be continued through the coming year to determine the long-term effects of the compensatory and remedial programs. (tracking to continue until the specified group of students has completed the Exit Examination)

   (b) That efforts be made to incorporate drop-out information with the BSAP tracking.

   (c) That attention be given to those schools where more than half of the students with long-standing participation in remedial programs continue to score below standard. Effort should be made to determine the cause and to develop appropriate action plans.

2. That a continuing effort be made to improve the library book program by adequately funding for resource materials that are current and in compliance with Southern Association Certification standards.

BASIC SKILLS ADVISORY COMMISSION

(continued)

3. That emphasis be placed on the school counseling program to assure that adequate attention be given to all students experiencing difficulties in meeting the BSAP standards. Parental involvement should be an integral part of this program.

4. That continued funding be made available for "At Risk" programs already in place. Those districts who have not yet implemented programs should be urged to replicate successful programs.

5. That although the results of the Exit Exam are encouraging, special attention be given to that segment of the population that continues to have a high failure rate. We regard this problem as critical and recommend that an action plan be developed to assist these students.

6. That the Commission having successfully performed its duties since its inception, should continue beyond 1991 as an oversight group of concerned citizens to advise regarding BSAP II, Target 2000, and the Exit Exam.

APPENDIX A

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BASIC SKILLS ADVISORY COMMISSION

BASIC SKILLS ADVISORY COMMISSION

04-11-90

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTEES

Congressional District I

Ms. Beth McDermott, P.O. Box 1957, Beaufort, SC 29901

Congressional District II

Ms. Deborah K. Bishop, 7602 Hunt Club Road, C-111, Columbia, SC 29223

Congressional District III

Mr. Harold Breazeale, 1847 Reece Mill Road, Pickens, SC 29671

Congressional District IV

Mrs. W. Harrison Trammell, 206 Riverbend Apts., 925 Cleveland Street, Greenville, SC 29601

Congressional District V

Dr. James Olsen, 55 Society Street, Charleston, SC 29401

Congressional District VI

Dr. James Mahaffey, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Drawer 1739, Conway, SC 29526

Member-at-Large

Mr. Larry C. Marchant, Jr., 105 Ashley Court, West Columbia, SC 29169

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S APPOINTEES

Congressional District I

Dr. Barbara B. Villeponteaux, 107 Furlong Road, Summerville, SC 29483

Congressional District II

Mrs. Betsy Elliott, Route 3, Box 477, St. Matthews, SC 29135

Congressional District III

Mrs. Nelle H. Taylor, District Superintendent, Saluda County Schools, 404 North Wise Road, Saluda, SC 29138

Congressional District IV

Mr. John L. Cannon, Principal, Woodruff Elementary School, P.O. Box 639, Woodruff, SC 29388

Congressional District V

Dr. Margot Rochester, 1292 Sand Oak Drive, Lugoff, SC 29078

Congressional District VI

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Mrs. S.C. Cureton, 1103 White Horse Road, Greenville, SC 29605

Vacancy

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE APPOINTEES

Mr. Joseph R. Murray, Box 1768, Charleston, SC 29402

Mrs. Mary McDonald Harper, P.O. Box 457, Estill, SC 29918

Dr. Willis H. Crosby, Jr., P.O. Box 1273, Greenville, SC 29602

Mr. Hugh Betchman, Jr., Box 1662, Sumter, SC 29150

The Honorable Lewis Phillips, 4556 North Highway 14, Greer, SC 29651

Vacancy